

University of Alabama at Birmingham

School of Education

Department of Human Studies

Counseling Program

2021-2022 State of the Program Report

Current Affiliated Faculty

Shannon McCarthy, Ph.D., *Assistant Professor, CACREP Liaison*

Dayna Watson, Ph.D., *Assistant Professor, Program Director*

Dwayne White, Ph.D., *Assistant Professor*

Heather Windham Ph. D., *Assistant Professor, Clinical Placement Coordinator*

Yusen Zhai, Ph.D., *Assistant Professor, Director of the UAB Community Counseling Clinic*

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The UAB Counseling Program (CP) relies on data from various sources to inform programmatic decisions. These data can be divided into two categories including enrollment data and learning outcomes. Enrollment data are used to document trends in the characteristics of applicants, current students, and alumni. Learning outcomes are used to assess whether students are indeed acquiring and demonstrating the knowledge, skills, and abilities targeted by the current curriculum. A detailed outline regarding the CP's assessment procedures is documented in the UAB Program Assessment and Evaluation Manual (available on the UAB Counseling Program website at <https://www.uab.edu/education/home/images/pdf/hs/cep-prog-eval-manual.pdf>). The purpose of the current report is to summarize program data to guide decision-making and program development and inform program stakeholders.

Enrollment Data

Enrollment data are collected via three data sources: Admission/Application Data, Enrollment or Headcount Data, and Specialty Track Data. This total may include certificate-only students. Overall, enrollment decreased slightly in 2021-2022 from the highest point in 2020-2021 due to decisions to admit fewer students than the previous year. This was a result of a need to meet CACREP ratios for full-time instructors to full-time students and a decrease in the number of core faculty, while multiple searches were held.

| Enrollment Data | |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Academic | Count |
| Fall 2017 | 94 |
| Spring 2018 | 101 |
| Summer 2018 | 78 |
| Fall 2018 | 99 |
| Spring 2019 | 106 |
| Summer 2019 | 88 |
| Fall 2019 | 111 |
| Spring 2020 | 115 |
| Summer 2020 | 95 |
| Fall 2020 | 118 |
| Spring 2021 | 136 |
| Summer 2021 | 116 |
| Fall 2021 | 125 |
| Spring 2022 | 121 |
| Summer 2022 | 95 |

Student enrollment is also tracked by each specialty. A review of the data indicates that enrollment in the School Counseling (SC) track slightly trended down in 21-22. Program faculty will continue to monitor this trend to see if this pattern continues.

Substantial declines in summer enrollment can be observed because of the discontinuation of clinical coursework by SC students due to schools having fewer opportunities for clinical opportunities during these months. The program also traditionally offers fewer courses overall in the summer semester due to the shortened 10-week main session and the fact that most students tend to take a smaller course load in the summer.

Enrollment in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) has not significantly increased due to the program's administrative decision to admit fewer students over this academic year. A majority of the program's applications continued to be for the Clinical Mental Health concentration. The Marriage, Couples, and Family Counseling (MCFC) concentration, which began in Fall 2016, continued to grow steadily. MCFC enrollment specially increased since the CMHC certificate was added to our program offerings in 2019, which allowed MCFC students to also take the CMHC courses as part of their program of study. The CMHC certificate was developed in response to feedback from students who were interested in the MCF concentration but who wanted coursework in both MCF and CMH.

The CP does have some students (normally graduates of Counseling Programs, including UABs) who are admitted just for completion of the MCFC and CMHC certificates, and those numbers are listed below. As the numbers demonstrate, enrollment in the MCFC certificate increased since its introduction. The CMHC certificate, however, is still largely obtained by students who are already enrolled in the program and has less enrollment by certificate-only students. From looking at enrollment numbers and consulting with students, the reasons for the small number of students enrolled in the CMHC certificate-only pathway seem to have multiple explanations. First, it is the newer of the two concentrations, so there is less awareness, and there are also significantly fewer MCF graduates both from our program and other area programs than CMHC graduates. Finally, the LMFT credential that MCF students may pursue does not have the LPC option where applicants can have clinical hours reduced from the requirement if 15 post-graduate credits are obtained.

| 2021-2022 Enrollment by Concentration | | | | | |
|--|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | CMHC | SC | MCFC | MCFC Cert.- Only | CMHC Cert.- only |
| Fall 2017 | 60 | 25 | 5 | 4 | |
| Spring 2018 | 66 | 25 | 6 | 4 | |
| Summer 2018 | 56 | 12 | 8 | 2 | |
| Fall 2018 | 66 | 23 | 8 | 2 | |
| Spring 2019 | 72 | 21 | 11 | 2 | |
| Summer 2019 | 62 | 12 | 10 | 4 | |
| Fall 2019 | 76 | 22 | 12 | 1 | |
| Spring 2020 | 80 | 22 | 12 | 1 | |

| | | | | | |
|-------------|----|----|----|---|---|
| Summer 2020 | 63 | 16 | 9 | 7 | 1 |
| Fall 2020 | 87 | 18 | 13 | 5 | 1 |
| Spring 2021 | 96 | 19 | 21 | 7 | 1 |
| Summer 2021 | 83 | 14 | 19 | 9 | 2 |
| Fall 2021 | 81 | 18 | 26 | 5 | 1 |
| Spring 2022 | 77 | 16 | 28 | 4 | 1 |
| Summer 2022 | 63 | 11 | 21 | 8 | 1 |

CMHC: Clinical Mental Health Counseling; SC: School Counseling; MCFC: Marriage Couples and Family Counseling; MCFC Cert.: Marriage, Couples, and Family Counseling Certificate; CMHC Cert: Clinical Mental Health Counseling Certificate

NOTE: The MCFC and MCFC Cert programs began Fall 2016. The CMHC Cert. program began Fall 2019 for internal students, and Summer 2020 for external certificate-only students.

National Counselor Examination (NCE) Examination Results 2018-2022

| Date of NCE | Number Tested | Number Passed | Passage Rate |
|-------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| Fall 2018 | 7 | 7 | 100% |
| Spring 2019 | 14 | 13 | 93% |
| Fall 2019 | 4 | 4 | 100% |
| Spring 2020 | 18 | 16 | 88% |

| | | | |
|-------------|----|----|------|
| Fall 2020 | 10 | 9 | 90% |
| Spring 2021 | 17 | 17 | 100% |
| Fall 2021 | 10 | 10 | 100% |
| Spring 2022 | 19 | 19 | 100% |

As evidenced by this chart, UAB Counseling student pass rates remain consistently high for the NCE.

NOTE: The NCE is typically offered in the Fall and Spring each year.

Key Program Indicator: CPCE Examination Results (Non-Exit) 2021-2022

*The following results reflect scores from Fall 2021, Spring 2022, and Summer 2022 examinations. The CPCE is taken by each student the semester before beginning their clinicals which is generally during their last year of the program. The UAB scores and National scores represent those students who took the exam as a non-exit exam. The UAB internal Counseling Program pass rate for 2020-2021 was 94% for individual students. It should be noted that students may take the exam up to three times to pass. Therefore, while the n below is 54 for all 3 semesters, that number represents test attempts, not individual students, and includes a small number of students re-taking the test. Of the 51 individual students who took the exam in that one-year, 48 passed; 3 did not.

CPCE Examination Results (Non-Exit) Fall 2021

| Exam Section (Possible range for each section is 0-17) | UAB Results Fall 2021 (Average Score) n=7 | 2021 National Results (Average Score) |
|---|--|--|
| Professional Counseling Orientation & Ethical Practice | 12.4 | 11.31 |
| Social & Cultural Diversity | 9.9 | 8.81 |

| | | |
|--|------|-------|
| Human Growth & Development | 9.7 | 8.38 |
| Career Development | 10.4 | 9.08 |
| Counseling & Helping Relationships | 11.1 | 9.04 |
| Group Counseling & Group Work | 11.7 | 9.73 |
| Assessment & Testing | 10.1 | 8.69 |
| Research & Program Evaluation | 11.7 | 9.04 |
| Total Score (Highest possible score is 136) | 87.1 | 74.08 |

CPCE Examination Results (Non-Exit) Spring & Summer 2022

| Exam Section | UAB Results Spring 22 (Average Score) n=23 | UAB Results Summer 22 (Average Score) n=24 | 2022 National Results (Average Score) |
|--|---|---|--|
| Professional Counseling Orientation & Ethical Practice | 13.0 | 13.0 | 12 |
| Social & Cultural Diversity | 10.9 | 11.4 | 10.5 |
| Human Growth & Development | 10.4 | 10.6 | 9.94 |
| Career Development | 12.4 | 12.0 | 10.66 |
| Counseling & Helping Relationships | 12.9 | 13.7 | 12.03 |

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|------|------|-------|
| Group Counseling & Group Work | 12.7 | 13.1 | 11.47 |
| Assessment & Testing | 9.7 | 10.7 | 9.13 |
| Research & Program Evaluation | 12.7 | 13.4 | 10.69 |
| Total Score | 94.8 | 97.9 | 86.41 |

From these data, it appears that UAB counseling students, on average, continue to score significantly above the national average for the total score. UAB Counseling students appear to consistently demonstrate particularly strong performances in Professional Counseling Orientation & Ethical Practice, Career Development, Group Counseling, and Research & Program Evaluation as compared to the national mean (more than 1- 1.3 points higher on average in each administration in 2021-2022). Conversely, UAB student scores tend to fall closer to the national means across administrations (within 1 point, averaged across administrations) in Social & Cultural Diversity and Human Growth and Development. Counseling Program faculty will continue to monitor the scores for these two areas in subsequent exams to see if an evaluation of the curriculum/texts used needs to occur in the future. UAB students did not fall below the national mean in any categories in the 2021-2022 academic year.

Key Program Indicator: Counselor Competencies Scale (CCS)

Midterm and Final Evaluations for ECG 695, 696, and 697 AY 2021-2022

The Counselor Competencies Scale (CCS) is a Key Performance Indicator administered to all students in each semester of clinicals in ECG 695, ECG 696, and ECG 697. Clinical site supervisors complete the CCS for each student midway through the semester (the midterm evaluation) and at the end of the semester (the final evaluation). The CCS evaluates 32 clinical skills and professional dispositions through three sections (Primary Counseling Skills, Professional Dispositions, and Professional Behaviors), and has four categories: Unacceptable (score of 1), Near Expectations (score of 2), Meets Expectations (score of 3), and Exceeds Expectations (score of 4). Students are expected to have an average score of at least 3 on the CCS after each clinical semester.

2021-2022 AY CCS Average Scores

| Course | Midterm Evaluation (Range 1.0-4.0) | Final Evaluation (Range 1.0-4.0) |
|---------------|--|--|
| | | |

| | | |
|----------------------------------|------|-------|
| ECG 695: Practicum II | 3.34 | 3.43 |
| ECG 696: Counseling Internship A | 3.48 | 3.616 |
| ECG 697: Counseling Internship B | 3.47 | 3.68 |

As evidenced by the above chart, for the academic year 2021-2022, Counseling Program students scored above the Meets Expectations category (3.0) for both the midterm and final evaluations. Each semester, students either increased or maintained scores from the midterm to the final evaluation towards the Exceeds Expectations category (4.0). Due to the lack of variance between the Internship midterm and final evaluations, CP faculty plan to more clearly communicate the intended use of the evaluation and the value of each category to site supervisors and students.

Key Program Indicators: Academic Assignments/ Exams in core curriculum:

In the UAB Counseling Program Evaluation and Assessment Manual, the Counseling Program identified assignments/exams in eight core courses that were designated as Key Performance Indicators (KPI). The scores for these assignments/exams are recorded for each student for each semester that the course is taught. For the 2021-2022 academic year, 100% of students passed these KPI assignments/exams.

Non-Academic Program Outcomes:

The UAB CP has multiple non-academic program outcomes for all students to enhance their professional development and identity throughout the program. These include eight sessions of individual counseling completed while they are enrolled and before they begin clinicals, presenting a poster at an academic counseling or counseling-related conference, and completing 15 hours of additional professional development before graduation.

All students who graduated in the 2021-2022 academic year completed eight counseling sessions as a client before starting clinical courses. All students who graduated during this academic period completed 15 hours of approved counseling-related professional development training while enrolled in the UAB Counseling Program. At least half of these hours are completed through workshops and monthly seminars offered by the UAB Counseling Program's Zeta Chapter of Chi Sigma Iota, the international counseling honor society. These requirements are documented via written confirmation by the counselor that the student attended the sessions (via a student-signed release) and attendance taken at professional development events or certificates of attendance from outside events.

Thirty-one students presented 20 different posters at the annual Alabama Counseling Association Conference in Birmingham in November 2021. That year marked a return for the graduate poster session to this conference after it was not held the previous year due to the 2020 conference being entirely virtual.

Faculty Changes in 2021-2022 academic year:

Two new faculty, Dr. Dwayne White, and Dr. Yusen Zhai, joined the counseling faculty at the beginning of the 2021-2022 academic year, replacing two visiting faculty members. Dr. Zhai also took on the role of Clinic Director starting in August 2021.

Two CP faculty searches were conducted throughout the 2021-2022 academic year due to the previous departure of our school counseling faculty member and a need for another marriage, couples, and family counseling faculty member. Dr. Heather Windham was hired and began as a Non-Tenure-Track Assistant Professor in Fall 2022, specializing in school counseling. A second faculty search for a licensed marriage, couples, and family counseling position did not result in a hire during the academic period at that time.

Other Program Changes/Events (based on student and faculty feedback, program outcome data, etc.)

For the 2021-2022 academic year, the UAB Counseling Program reinstated the GRE requirement for admission due to feedback from faculty who expressed having difficulty evaluating candidates without that data point. Based on student and faculty feedback, the admissions protocol for the UAB CP continued to take place online with small groups of 4-5 applicants being interviewed by 2-3 faculty members and adjunct faculty (this amended protocol began in Spring 2020).

In August 2021, the UAB Community Counseling Clinic (CCC) returned to in-person services after offering telehealth-only services summer 2020-2021. This marked the first time clients were seen in the new Education and Engineering Complex (EEC) building's clinic space, though students worked in the space while conducting telehealth since spring 2021. This allowed for the use of the new play therapy space, which aids the clinic in serving younger clientele. A HIPAA-approved audio recording system was used until the camera system and server could be approved and installed in spring 2022. The camera and server system were overhauled to further align with HIPAA best practices and ensure data security. This effort began in the fall of 2020 under Dr. McCarthy, the previous interim director of the CCC, and then-department chair Dr. Eric Plaisance. The School of Education was also able to procure two dedicated parking spots behind the EEC building to increase ease of access for clients.

In addition, Dr. Zhai worked with UAB Information Technology and HSIS Health System Information Services (HSIS) to implement the previously purchased Electronic Health Record system, Titanium. The implementation of the system allowed the CCC to move to a more

convenient filing system which allowed for better ease of use for counselors-in-training and faculty. Dr. Zhai worked with clinic students to begin placing files into the Titanium system. The eventual goal is for all current and previous client files to be housed in this HIPAA-approved electronic system. Additionally, the clinic began implementation of MedForward, a secure online form system that allows for client forms to be completed and signed electronically, which increased convenience and ease of use for CCC clients and counselors-in-training.

In response to the requests of site supervisors and clinical instructors, the Counselor Competencies Scale evaluation CCS, which is used for site supervisors to evaluate students in clinicals at both midterm and final points of each semester, was put online through UAB's Qualtrics system, an online survey, and data system, instead of Taskstream where they were previously completed. The other Key Performance Indicators that are attached to classes, such as assignments and exams, are housed on the data management system Taskstream. The sign-up process for external site supervisors, however, had multiple steps to navigate via Taskstream, which caused some confusion, and this new method allowed for a more simplistic and streamlined process.

In response to student requests and to add additional placement sites considering the unavailability of some sites due to pandemic-related restrictions, the Counseling Program added more private practice sites for clinical experiences. Dr. Watson, the clinical coordinator, also worked on adding more marriage, couples, and family counseling sites to accommodate the growing number of MCF students. This gives students a chance to experience an even larger range of possible clinical settings and populations.